

COCHITUATE RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
February 2, 2016, 6:30 PM  
Dlott Meeting Room, Town Hall

Name	Affiliation	Present	Absent
Josh Ostroff	Board of Selectmen	X	
Jamie Errickson	Director of Community and Economic Development	X	
Dick Cugini	Recreation and Parks Commission	X	
John Magee	Bicycle and Pedestrian	X	
William Schoenig	Member at Large (clerk)	X	
David Camacho	Member at Large (vice chair)		X
Eric Jones	Member at Large		X
Peter Henry	Member at Large	X	
Jan Henderson	Member at Large (chair)	X	

Also present: Bill McGrath (BETA Group). The meeting was called to order at 6:32 P.M.

**1. Introductions**

Participants introduced themselves.

**2. Project Updates**

**A. MBTA/MassDOT meeting**

In a site meeting with MBTA, MassDOT staff, Town staff and BETA where the CRT 25% plans were discussed, MBTA staff were willing to see the CRT terminus near the station, but stated the need for continued access to the station area and that the drainage systems not be impacted. The CRTAC discussed: whether the CRT terminus should be part of the MBTA station redesign (may be on the state CIP for design in February, several years of design and construction cost of around \$25m anticipated as a federal/state project); whether there could be access via Willow Street (a town road) without significant grade changes (it's possible); the dollar limit of ADA improvements to the station (30% of assessed value, so no improvements are likely short of a full redesign); the viability other possible access points including Cochituate Street, Spring Street, or a retaining wall and ramp near Stone's and Pizza Plus (all involving major grade changes); or a dead-end near the tracks. There was discussion about the various outcomes and potential timelines. After discussion, a motion was made by J. Ostroff to recommend to the Board Of Selectmen that the CRT project terminus end at Willow Street as Phase I, with a subsequent connection to the MBTA station at a future date. W. Schoenig seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve. A future Phase II project should include a design for both the terminus for the CRT and the station redesign. BETA will estimate any reduction in fee due to the reduced workload for 75% design.

**B. Utility Meetings**

BETA completed the additional survey work at Rt. 30 and submitted it to MassDOT. MassDOT is doing the survey work at Rt. 9. Once that is completed they will call a meeting with the utility companies. The utilities are required to attend these meetings and provide timely information. They have an incentive to meet as they only pay 50% of the relocation costs. The meeting will mostly likely include Eversource, telephone and cable. BETA estimates it could take place in 4 weeks.

**C. Public hearing/public meeting schedule**

Given the questions that were raised at the January meeting the group discussed holding another public meeting to review funding issues in particular prior to Town Meeting. J. Ostroff will talk with the Finance Committee to see if they might want to convene it. MassDOT might attend, but this would be a Town meeting. BETA will send a draft schedule of the MassDOT process to the Committee.

**D. Acquisition**

**i. Eminent domain question**

J. Ostroff reported that according to Town Counsel, due to federal railbanking regulations, the Town can't use eminent domain as a way to obtain the CSX property. The Town record of the appraisal should be available at the next meeting, and be put on the FAQ of the webpage.

**ii. Non-CSX acquisitions and easements**

G. Lewis will find the easements related to Longs Jewelers, Lake Street/Paperboard, and the Framingham License to see what additional work may be required. CSX is ready to disclaim ownership of the Wonderbread Spur, however the 1875 deed and 2008 title search need to be reviewed by Town Counsel to ensure there aren't other property rights of concern. MassDOT needs easement information and has received a timeline for appraisals..

**iii. Review of funding sources**

Total funding needed for acquisition of the CSX ROW is \$6.345m, and may include: 1) \$2.5m from the 'Conservation Fund' (officially the FAR Bonus Stabilization Fund) which comes from mitigation payments by developers dedicated to land acquisition; 2) \$3m from the state Transportation Bond Bill authorized in 2014; and 3) \$1m from private fundraising via the Friends Group and/or grants. Town Meeting will be asked to approve spending \$2.5m out of the \$5.5m total in the FAR fund. We need to make it clear that local taxpayers will pay \$0, except for annual maintenance, and the Friends may help with some of that.

**iv. Friends of Natick Trails report**

J. Magee attended the last Friends meeting and reported that they will work to incorporate and then file paperwork that will allow them to collect donations (aim to be done March or April). They are working on a draft Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of Selectmen, which will allow them to fundraise on

behalf of the Town's acquisition, including naming rights and sponsorship levels. They plan to create a website that people can use to make donations. The Friends asked if some of CRT renderings are available in higher resolution. G. Lewis will send graphics to them.

**v. Appraisal public record question**

The Purchase and Sale (P&S) should be signed in 1-2 weeks. The appraisal will be ready for the Finance Committee meeting.

**E. Environmental Testing**

CSX requires environmental testing to be done once the P&S is signed. The 6" borings will cost \$18K. The Selectmen will be asked to approve the work, for which a quote has been provided.

**F. Construction**

- In response to a question about permeable pavement, B. McGrath stated that it only makes sense at low points, not for the whole corridor. The maintenance costs for permeable pavement are higher and it clogs over time. With the current design the run-off goes to the swales, only 6 feet away. The CSX desires to seal the ROW due to arsenic and other things that are found in railroad right of ways. This would not solve black or glare ice issues, which were raised at the January 11 meeting.
- At Rt. 30, B. McGrath explained that the railroad bed is raised a bit but changing the elevation would not significantly affect the length of the bridge ramps. They will review the survey to confirm.
- Regarding the width of the paved trail, we already widened the path from 10' to 12'. It would be possible to enlarge it to 14' in some areas, but this would be a challenge at the bridges. The Route 9 bridge will already be 18-20' wide, including the structure, and transporting something this wide is not easy. BETA explained that ideally the path width will be consistent along its length. The price would increase depending on how much more pavement is added. The group may ask to evaluate this as part of the 25% design review.
- The suggested asymmetric design at intersections would need to become part of the final design, but does not need to be changed at this time. This can also become part of our comments on the 25% design.

**G. Maintenance & Management**

J. Errickson stated that most likely the DPW will maintain the trail, and The Friends may host clean-up events (which could be included in an agreement with the Friends). We will need to do some work to define who will manage the trail. G. Lewis will see how Framingham and other trails do this. For example, does it become part of the Parks & Recreation jurisdiction?

**3. Meeting Minutes**

Minutes from 8/04/2014, 12/17/2014, 8/04/2015, and 9/03/2015 were reviewed. Dick Cugini asked to amend the 8/04/2014 minutes to include the need for fencing and gates along the edge of the Camp Arrowhead grounds. With this change J. Ostroff made a motion to approve this set of minutes. W. Schoeing seconded. The voted to approve was unanimous.

#### **4. Committee Organization**

J. Henderson explained that with Josh Ostroff stepping down as Town Selectman the BOS may continue to have him serve as the Board's representative to the CRTAC; and given his familiarity with state agencies and his depth of knowledge related to this project, J.Henderson suggested that he serve as committee Chair, to which he agreed. After some discussion J. Henderson made a motion to nominate J. Ostroff as Chair, John Magee seconded and the group voted unanimously in favor. W. Schoeing noted that he would happily give up the Clerk note-taking responsibilities and nominated J. Henderson as Clerk, seconded by J. Ostroff, and the unanimously voted. Dave Camacho will remain Vice Chair.

#### **5. Web Page**

Framingham has their own website: CRTrail.org. They were happy to receive Eric Jones's notes on things that should be updated. He could use the committee's knowledge in order to update the Natick CRT website (at Natickma.gov) as well. Please send him any feedback.

#### **6. Proposed Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

The TAC was approved by the Board of Selectmen, and the Bike/Pedestrian Advisory Committee and MBTA Station Advisory Committee have been discharged. The TAC will consider all modes of transportation to help ensure that we have coordinated projects and comprehensive policies. They will take a 360 degree view of the town trails, complete streets, regional transit authority plans, etc. The Board will seek nominations shortly.

#### **7. Other Business**

- A. CRT Annual Report** – Every committee is required to submit a report to the Town annually prior to Town Meeting. J. Henderson and J. Ostroff wrote it this year. It was disseminated electronically to the Town Clerk and CRT Advisory Committee.
- B. Natick Center Plan Forum** – Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 Morse Library. This is a study being done with the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) and the Town. Please attend.
- C. Earth Day Table** – Natick Common, May 1, 11-3:00. J. Ostroff and J. Magee volunteered to staff a table at the Earth Day Event in the Common.

#### **8. Next Meeting** – The group will schedule a public meeting, potentially with the Finance Committee late in March.

On a motion by J. Henderson, seconded by P. Henry, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn the public meeting at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by J. Henderson